



Okehampton Town Council

Okehampton Town Council

Civic/Council Protocol and the Role of the Mayor

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Councillors, in particular the Mayor, are expected to attend the events listed within this document where possible.

Dress Code

When attending Civic events Councillors must be smartly dressed, wearing Council ties and badges as appropriate and in accordance with the type of event.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is classed the second citizen, the first being the Mayor, and should accompany the Mayor on Civic occasions wearing the robe. In the event the Clerk is unavailable the Assistant Clerk may deputise but does not wear the robe.

As Proper Officer the Town Clerk, or Assistant Clerk if deputising, is responsible for the Council's Civic Events. Therefore, any instruction to other bodies and/or Councillors, and decisions falls within the remit of the Clerk and takes precedence over any others.

Mace Bearers

The role of the Mace Bearers is to provide assistance and guidance to the Mayor as required at Civic events and to ensure the Mayor has a clear way ahead.

Mace Bearers must be smartly dressed in suitable attire when undertaking the Civic role.

Mayor's Chaplain

Each year the Mayor, at their discretion, can appoint a Chaplain who will undertake to attend and have a role in the Council's Civic events. The Chaplain may also attend meetings of full Council to offer prayers.

Mayor's Cadet

Annually on an alternating basis the Air and Army Cadet groups will be asked to nominate a Cadet to take up the position of the Mayor's Cadet. The role is to accompany and support the Mayor at the Town Council's Civic Events.

Town Crier

Ms Ros Chard is the Town Crier and can be invited, as approved by the Mayor and Town Clerk, to attend Town Council events for the agreed fee which is paid from the event or Mayor's expense budget.

Death of a former Town Mayor

On being informed of the passing of a former Town Mayor, the current Mayor will send a card on behalf of the Town Council and attend the funeral, providing it is held within a reasonable distance of the town, as the official Council representative. Unless the full Chain of Office is requested by the family the day chain will be worn. If the full Chain of Office is worn, it will be that purchased in 2025 and not the original.

The Deputy Mayor may attend the funerals of ex-Mayors if the Mayor is unable to attend as long as these funerals are in the town or very local.

Other Members of the Council attending will do so personally as a member of the public or as a fellow councillor, but the Mayor will be in attendance as official council representative.

Death of a monarch

On being informed of the passing of a monarch the Mayor may be required to undertake certain tasks, for example the reading of a proclamation.

THE MAYOR

Background

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gave parish councils the power by resolution to give themselves the title of Town Council.

The Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to be called 'Town Mayor'. A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a local Council Chairman. Undertaking the role of Mayor is a Civic office and the Mayor has the opportunity to stimulate community pride, encourage business and promote the voluntary sector.

The Mayor is elected by the full Council at the Annual Council meeting in May. A Deputy is also elected at this meeting. The Mayor makes the declaration of acceptance of office when accepting this role at the Mayor Choosing Ceremony. The Mayor's term of office is for one year and during this time the Mayor continues to be a Member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council. In accordance with Okehampton Town Council's (OTC) Standing Orders, a Councillor may not hold the office of Mayor for more than two consecutive years.

The usual form of address for the Mayor is Mr/Madam Mayor.

Role of the Mayor

During the Civic year, the Mayor supports a wide variety of events throughout the town. The Mayor receives invitations to all kinds of events and every invitation is considered equally. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor may be asked to attend on his/her behalf.

Duties which the Mayor may carry out include:

- organising events to raise funds for the Mayors chosen charity
- acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council
- attending functions within Okehampton or, on occasions, outside the town as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- receive visiting dignitaries

The Mayor will choose his/her own consort who can be a partner, fellow Councillor, a family member or friend. If the consort is female, she is often referred to as the Mayoress.

The Mayors statutory functions include the chairing of Council meetings together with the casting vote in the event of a tie.

Civic Insignia

The Mayor's robes, chains and badge of office are the outward signs of the Civic office held, i.e. its insignia.

It is important to maintain the dignity of the office and that any use of the robes is not overdone. Therefore, robes will only be worn on Civic or named occasions within this document.

When representing the Town Council, the Mayor and consort will normally wear the official Chains of Office. The Chains of Office will normally be worn at all Civic functions within the town, whilst the day-chain will be worn at the non-Civic functions. Chains can be worn at functions outside the town when invited in an official capacity although there are some exceptions to this which are usually specified in the official invitation.

The historic Chains of Office are only worn at Okehampton Town Council Civic events held within the council boundary when the robes are worn. These are as follows:

- Mayor Choosing and Annual Council Meeting
- Civic Service
- Remembrance Service and Parade
- Commonwealth Day

For other events and those outside of the town the new Chains of Office purchased in 2025 or the day-chain will be worn.

Mayoresses Chain:

- A Mayoress/Consort cannot represent the council on behalf the Mayor, this being the role of the Deputy Mayor. As such the Chain must only be worn in the presence of the Mayor when the full mayoral chain is worn.
- The medallion/day-chain attached to the Mayoress' chain must not be removed and worn separately to the full chain for any reason

The Chains of Office are held in the Town Hall for collection by the Mayor when attending functions, to be returned as soon as possible. If held at home, the Mayor's home insurance company must be advised that this may occur during the year. The regalia will be signed in and out, and inspected to make sure that nothing is damaged, broken or missing. Any damaged or missing part must be reported to the Clerk who, if the damage is significant, will bring it to the attention of the Council. Repeated breaches of the protocol will also be brought to the council's attention.

The Mayor should not wear the Civic insignia in another area without express permission from the Council of that area.

Dress Code

The Office of Mayor is a formal role and casual clothes are inappropriate when the Mayoral chain is worn. The type of dress to be worn at functions is usually given on the invitation.

Administrative Support

Day to day support for the Mayor is provided by the Assistant Clerk under the direction of the Town Clerk.

Invitations for the Mayor **must** be sent directly to the Assistant Clerk who liaises with the Mayor before accepting or declining invitations. A diary is kept in the Town Hall of all Civic events the Mayor is attending and the Mayor will always receive a copy of the invitation and reply for information; regular consultation with the Assistant Clerk is necessary. The Mayor will write their own thank-you letters after attending events.

The Mayor is responsible for the organisation of any fundraising events they may wish to hold during their term of office and for elements of events such as the Civic/Charity Dinner which must be self-funding.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires guidance this should be raised with the Town Clerk who will provide necessary information.

Mayor's Charity

The Mayors chosen charity traditionally raises funds for local charities. It is advisable to choose the charity or charities to be supported at an early stage. The Mayor may decide on either one main charity to support or two or three local charities or good causes. The chosen charity will be announced at the Mayor Choosing Ceremony. The charity/charities will then be notified and all funds raised at the events will be held in the Mayors Charity Account and will be donated to the chosen charity at a presentation at the next Mayor Choosing event.

Fundraising events for the charity are organised by the Mayor, with some minor assistance by the Assistant Clerk. The Charter Hall or Council facilities may be used free of charge for a maximum of two occasions throughout the Mayoral year for this purpose.

Mayor's Budget

The Mayor may claim expenses relating to the Office of Mayor. The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the Civic allowance, however it is commonly described as recompense for the expenses of maintaining the dignity of the office. Furthermore, general items include:

- clothing
- donations to charities
- collections
- one-off events held by the Mayor

When attending Civic dinners and other events to which the Mayor is invited the expense shall be met by the Mayor's budget. This includes expenses incurred by the consort and Deputy Mayor when attending events on behalf of the Mayor.

The Council's budget contains provision for certain Civic events including Mayor Choosing, Civic Service, Remembrance Sunday and receiving Civic visitors. It is important for the Mayor to plan to use the allowance over the year and once the budget level has been reached, no payments can be made or further orders placed by Council staff unless endorsed by Council from reserve funds.

Deputy Mayor

The Member elected as Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unable to do so. Some confusion has arisen in the past over the status of the Deputy Mayor; the Deputy Mayor has no standing as Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is present, but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when he/she is deputising for the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor must not wear the Deputy's Chain of Office in the presence of the Town Mayor.

Invitations to the Deputy Mayor must be dealt with as follows.

- All invitations must be sent for consideration by the Mayor as first citizen and, if the Mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to pass the invitation to the Deputy Mayor
- Invitations to functions must not be sent directly to the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not normally attend functions as Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is in attendance, except for Remembrance Day.

Civic Year Events

Below is a list of typical events which take place during the Mayors year in office.

Mayor Choosing Ceremony - This event is held in May as part of the Annual Council Meeting and ratifies the appointment of Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor in a ceremony held in the Town Hall or Charter Hall; Civic robes are worn on this occasion. Refreshments are held in the Charter Hall after the formal meeting.

Ten Tors - The Mayor is usually invited to the Ten Tors event in May.

Okehampton Agricultural Show – The Mayor is usually invited in some capacity in August.

Civic Service - The Civic Service is usually held in September in one of the town's churches. There is a parade from the Town Hall to the church and back requiring a road closure which

is organised by the Town Council. OTC appoints a Parade Commander. A Mayor's Cadet is appointed each year (usually at the Mayor Choosing Ceremony) from either the Army Cadets or the Air Cadets. After the Parade has returned from the Church, the Mayor inspects the Parade. Civic robes are worn on this occasion.

Okehampton Carnival - This takes place in October and is a busy day. The Mayor is invited to act as judge in the afternoon followed by crowning of the Prince and Princess and the Children's Parade. In the evening the Mayor is then asked to judge floats, crown the carnival Queen and takes part in the Parade through the town - a car is usually provided by the Carnival Committee.

Remembrance Parade - Organised by the Okehampton Branch of the Royal British Legion in conjunction with OTC. The road closure is organised by OTC and the Royal British Legion appoint the Parade Commander. Members of the Royal British Legion march to the church in front of the Town Councillors. The Mayor is expected to read the Role of Honour at the War Memorial and lay a wreath and may be asked to light a candle during the church service, if an indoor service is held. The Mayor will be asked to inspect the Parade on return to Fore Street. Full robes are worn. Upon invitation the Deputy Mayor attends the service at the Catholic Church.

Armistice Day – If a service is held at St James Chapel on Remembrance Day, 11th November, the Mayor is expected to attend.

Edwardian Evening - In recent years the Mayor has held a small reception in the Council Chamber for visiting Mayors, Chairmen and local guests. This is followed by the Mayor's Carol Singing. Edwardian Evening is organised by the Okehampton BID. The Excelsior Silver Band provides the music for the singing of the Mayor's Carols. The Mayor is then expected (with the Mace Bearers and Clerk) to tour the shops.

Commonwealth Day - This takes place in March with a flag raising ceremony outside of St James' Chapel and the Mayor reads the Commonwealth Affirmation.

Charity Dinner/event - This is usually held in the Town Hall/Charter Hall. Invitees can include Civic dignitaries from the Borough and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations and others at the discretion of the Town Mayor from Devon and Launceston. This event must be self-funding and is organised by the Mayor with minor assistance of the Assistant Clerk.

Other Town and City Invitations

The Mayors of other Councils generally invite the Mayor of Okehampton to various events ranging from Civic services, mayor choosing events, Civic/charity dinners and ancient fairs.

Examples of these events are:

Great Torrington May Fair - Local schools perform maypole dancing. The town is closed to traffic and many thousands of people line the streets for the Mayor's Parade.

Holsworthy Pretty Maids Fair - This is a morning event followed by a formal lunch. In the morning the Mayor is expected to be involved, a good event to socialise with other Mayors.

Tavistock Goose Fayre - Goose Fayre is on a Wednesday in October and The Mayor is usually invited to a tour of the Fayre on Tuesday evening followed by a small reception. This is usually attended by the Mayor of Tavistock and Mayor of West Devon.

Official Positions Held

On appointment as Mayor you automatically hold the following positions as ex-officio:

- Trustee of Okehampton United Charity/ Okehampton Foundation
- Trustee of Simmons Homes
- President of the Friendly Circle - as president the Mayor will be asked to chair the Annual General Meeting and invited to their Christmas dinner.
- Become an honorary member of Okehampton Rotary

Other Annual Events

- Start of the bowling season (to throw the first jack)- April
- Rotary Fair

TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL CIVIC EVENTS

Mayor Choosing Ceremony	May (2 nd Wednesday, except in an election year)
Civic Service and Parade	September (3 rd Sunday)
Remembrance Parade and Service	November
Commonwealth Day	March

Invitations

Invitations to other councils will be limited to those in Devon and the bordering Cornish town of Launceston.

Mayor Choosing Ceremony

General Information

The Mayor Choosing Ceremony is the first event in the Mayoral Year and takes place on the second Wednesday in May, except in the year of ordinary elections when it is usually the third Wednesday, as part of the Council Annual Meeting. This is a formal event when the Robes and Chain are worn and to which other Mayors, Chairman, employees and other persons are invited.

Nominations Meeting

In the weeks leading up to the event an informal nominations meeting is held when the Mayor Elect is chosen, Committee members are appointed, and other positions are voted upon and agreed in principle.

The Annual Council Meeting

Invitations to the event are agreed by the Town Clerk and outgoing Mayor, with the Mayor elect being given the opportunity to invite personal guests.

Immediately prior to the official Meeting, a short Presentation Ceremony is held during which the outgoing Mayor presents the Mayor's Awards, having previously been agreed by the Council and the recipients having been invited to the event.

An annotated agenda is provided to all Councillors by the Clerk which details who speaks and when as agreed at the nominations meeting and which provides an outline of proceedings.

Councillors should be aware that this is a very public civic occasion. Members of the public attending often have no idea what happens at council meetings and limited knowledge about what the council does. Councillors must speak clearly and obviously raise their hands when voting. It is useful for members of the public if Councillors give an explanation when making a proposal, for example a Councillor proposing committee members could give a brief explanation of what that committee is responsible for.

The outgoing Mayor, whether or not they have been re-elected in the year of a local election, presides over the meeting until the incoming Mayor is officially appointed. Election of the Mayor for the coming year must be the first item on the agenda of the Annual Council Meeting.

Both the outgoing and incoming Mayors are invited to give a short speech,

Following the appointment of the Mayor, the outgoing and ingoing Mayors retire for a short period and, with the assistance of the or Assistant Clerk or another person if required, swap the robe and chain.

At the end of the meeting an official photograph of the newly appointed Mayor and invited Mayors and Chairs is taken and invited guests are welcomed to the Charter Hall for refreshments.

Civic Service

General Information

The Civic Service is an annual Town Council event that usually takes place on the third Sunday of September, at a time and location agreed annually by the Mayor in conjunction with the Church, and with the approval of the Council. The Service is led by the Mayor's Chaplain or a nominated person.

If the service is held at Fairplace Church, the outgoing route is Fore Street/Mill Road with the return route being via George Street to enable the Mayor to accept the salutes. If the service is held at another location, the Clerk will determine the route to be taken in consultation with the Mayor.

Being a Council event, the arrangements are made by Council Officers, including the road closure for the Parade.

Half an hour before the Parade is due to form up, Council facilities and refreshments will be made available for Members and Guests. Refreshments will consist of tea/coffee and water/orange juice (or similar).

Members of the Council are requested to be in attendance in the Council Chamber to welcome visiting dignitaries.

Beadles from visiting Councils do not form part of the procession and should follow either alongside or behind the Parade. When in Church they will be expected to find themselves a seat. Beadles are welcome to refreshments before and after the event.

Parade Formation

The Parade will form up in Fore Street in front of the Town Hall shortly prior to marching off at the direction of the Parade Commander. The formation of the Parade and route being dependent upon the location of the service.

The Parade Commander, appointed by the Town Clerk, will normally be from the same organisation as the Mayor's Cadet.

The Order of Procession will be as follows (based on historical council records and Civic protocol):

Okehampton Excelsior Silver Band
Lord Lieutenant (or Deputy if present)
Mayor and Consort (flanked on either side by the Mace Bearers)
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Chairman of Devon County Council
Mayor and Mayoress/Consort of West Devon Borough Council
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude) with partners
Visiting Town Mayors and Consort
Visiting Parish Council Chairmen
Other Organisations
Members of the public

On arrival at the Church

Visiting dignitaries (whose seats are reserved), other organisations and members of the public make their way into the Church and take their seats.

Standard Bearers peel off as their organisation enters and then stand outside the entrance as their organisations enter the Church. They then enter before the council and stand at the rear of the church.

The Council will file into the Church in the following order:

Mace Bearers
Mayor and Consort
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)
Lord Lieutenant (or Deputy if present)

Seating for the Lord Lieutenant and Mayor's Party will be reserved, and names placed thereon on the right-hand side as walking down the aisle. Town Councillors partners will be seated in reserved pews alongside the Councillors. Mace Bearers will sit in the front row on either side of the aisle. DCC, WDBC and other visiting dignitaries will be seated on the left-hand side.

Standard Bearers present their standards at the altar prior to the service as indicated by the stewards and take their seats.

The Deputy Mayor, if undertaking a reading, will sit on the end of a row.

The Service

Normally the service is conducted by the Mayor's Chaplain, or nominated person, in conjunction with the appointed Church.

The Order of Service is prepared by the Mayor and Chaplain, or whoever is leading the Service.

Readings will be read by persons at the discretion of the Mayor, although this is usually the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

An offering will either be collected by the Church during the Service or on exit and will be divided between the Mayor's Charity and the Church.

In the event that the Mayor may not wish to hold the service in a Church, an alternative service may be held in another location; for example, the Charter Hall with a speaker of the Mayor's choice. In these circumstances the Parade can go ahead in its normal format.

Exit from the Church

Standard Bearers exit first after the National Anthem and stand at the entrance.

Exit is as follows in accordance with the processional Order:

Lord Lieutenant (or Deputy if present)
Mayor and Consort (flanked on either side by the Mace Bearers)
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Chairman of Devon County Council
Mayor and Mayoress/Consort of West Devon Borough Council
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude) with partners

Visiting Town Mayors and Consort
Visiting Parish Council Chairmen
Other Organisations
Members of the public

Parade Formation

The Parade will form up on the direction of the Parade Commander.

Parade Salute and Inspection

The following will peel off at the designated point in Fore Street:

Lord Lieutenant
Mace Bearers
Mayor and Consort
Town Clerk and Mayor's Cadet
Chairman of Devon County Council
Mayor and Mayoress/Consort of West Devon Borough Council
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)
Visiting Town Mayors and Consorts
Visiting Parish Council Chairmen

Lord Lieutenant, Mace Bearers, Mayor and Consort accept salutes from the detachments as they pass.

Once the Parade has been called to a halt the Parade Commander will invite the Mayor, accompanied by the Mace Bearers, Lord Lieutenant and Mayor's Cadet to inspect the Parade and will accompany the Mayor back to the Town Hall. Following which the Parade will be brought to attention for the National Anthem, prior to dismissal.

Refreshments

Once the Parade has been dismissed the Mayoral Party and Guests will be invited back to a location, usually the Council Chamber or Charter Hall, for light refreshments that take the form of sherry, tea/coffee, soft drinks, biscuits and/or cakes.

Remembrance Day Service and Parade

General Information

Remembrance Day Service and Parade is an annual event on or around 11th November. This event is organised and run by the Royal British Legion (RBL) in conjunction with The Town Council. The RBL appoint the Parade Commander and make the arrangements apart from the road closure which is applied for and the responsibility of Okehampton Town Council.

The Deputy Mayor attends the service in St Boniface Church where they will be met by a representative of the Church and provided with assistance and information relating to the service. There is a service in the Church followed by a short ceremony at the memorial during which the Deputy Mayor is requested to lay a wreath, provided by the Church, in front of the wooden crucifix. In the event the Deputy Mayor is unable to attend the previous Mayor or another Councillor may attend at the discretion of the Mayor and Clerk.

The Town Council wreath is collected by the Mayor's Cadet, unless it has been delivered directly to the Council offices, who carries it to the Church to be laid by the Mayor.

The Memorial is located in the Churchyard at All Saints Church, and is cleaned by Okehampton Town Council parks staff in the week leading up to the parade and service.

Half an hour before the Parade is due to form up, Council facilities and refreshments are made available for Members and Guests. Refreshments consist of tea/coffee and water/ orange juice (or similar).

All Members are expected to take part in this event for which full Civic Robes are worn. The Mayor is supported by the Mace Bearers, Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk. The wearing of Medals is encouraged.

For those who are unable to attend the external wreath-laying and reading of the Roll of Honour service, the Church may ask a member of the public to read the Roll of Honour inside All Saints Church.

Service sheets are provided by Okehampton Town Council at the request of the Rector and are placed on the front rows by the Church Stewards, if the service is held inside, or handed out by stewards on entering the Churchyard.

Parade Formation

The Parade will form up in Fore Street opposite the Town Hall at 10.20am, prior to marching off at the direction of the Parade Commander at 10.30am.

The Order of Procession will be:

Town Band
Royal British Legion
Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant
Devon County Council
West Devon Borough Council
Mayor and Consort (flanked by the Mace Bearers)
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)
Other visiting Mayor's/Chairmen
Other Organisations
Members of the public

Councillors may be accompanied by their partners.

On arrival at the Memorial – if there is an outdoor service only

All persons will be directed into the Churchyard by stewards arranged by the Church and/or RBL to enter through the bottom gate and gather at the Memorial.

A Service of Remembrance is led by the Rector at the Memorial in accordance with the order of service. The Mayor will read the Roll of Honour and wreaths will be laid, commencing with the Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant, The Mayor, Other representatives.

Following the National Anthem the Parade will reform in the road outside of the Churchyard and return to Fore Street in the following order:

Town Band
Royal British Legion
Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant (if present)
Devon County Council
West Devon Borough Council
Mayor and Consort (flanked by the Mace Bearers)
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)

Other visiting Mayors/Chairmen
Other Organisations
Members of the public

In the event the RBL wish the Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant and Mayor to take a salute from them, the Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant, Mayor, Mace Bearers and Clerk must lead the parade on the return. In this event the rest of the Council and other visiting dignitaries remain behind the RBL in the parade.

On arrival at the Churchyard – if there is an indoor service
The Band continue to the top entrance of the Church.

The Parade enters the Churchyard through the bottom gate and gathers at the Memorial.

A Service of Remembrance is led by the Rector at the Memorial in accordance with the order of service. The Mayor will read the Roll of Honour and wreaths will be laid, including one by the Mayor.

The Parade will then make their way along the path to the Church. Okehampton Town Council Members will stand aside in their parade order whilst other contingents and members of the public file into the Church.

On invitation by the rector/stewards/or RBL the Council enter the Church as follows:

Mace Bearers
Mayor and Consort
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)
Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant (if present)

Seats are normally reserved for Councillors on the righthand side front rows of the Church (looking from the rear). Both on entering and leaving the church, the Mayor and Council will be preceded by the Mace Bearers.

The Service

The Service will be led and prepared by the Rector, during which an offering will be collected.

The Mayor and nominated persons attending the service may be asked to light a candle.

Exit from the Church

Standard Bearers exit first after the National Anthem and stand at the entrance, followed in reverse order from entry:

Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant (if present)
Devon County Council
West Devon Borough Council
Mace Bearers
Mayor and Consort
Mayor's Cadet and Town Clerk
Town Councillors (in order of length of servitude)

Other Organisations
Members of the public

Parade Formation for return to the town

The Parade will reform in Church Avenue. The Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant, Mayor and Council party peel off at Town Hall or agreed location in Fore Street where they take the salute.

Parade leader invites Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant and Mayor accompanied by the Mace Bearers and Mayors Cadets inspect the parade. Following dismissal of the Parade, the National Anthem will be played again.

Refreshments will be available to participating contingents and any other persons who took part in the parade in the Council Chamber or Charter Hall unless alternative arrangements are made by the RBL. If refreshments are provided by the Council this will be in the form of sherry, tea/coffee, soft drinks and biscuits.

Commonwealth Day

This takes place in March and a short ceremony and takes place outside of St James' Chapel in the morning.

The Mayor, wearing the Robes and Chain, supported by the Clerk and Mace Bearers, reads the Commonwealth Affirmation and a flag on the Church Tower is raised.

Councillors and members of the public are encouraged to attend the event.

Civic/Charity Dinner

General Information

The Civic/Charity Event/Dinner can be held annually on a date agreed by the Mayor. This is an event to which other Mayors/Chairmen, dignitaries, representatives of local organisations and others are invited at the discretion of the Mayor.

A reception can be held in the Council Chamber at the discretion of the Mayor, followed by the dinner and any entertainment that may have been arranged in the Charter Hall by the Mayor.

The Council have resolved that from the 2023/24 budget year the event must be self-funding and that no duty 'free' tickets will be provided to any person, including Councillors and Mace Bearers. The Town Clerk can be invited to attend by the Mayor to assist but does not have to be present unless it is a formal Civic event. If the Clerk is in attendance, the cost can be reclaimed through expenses.

Any Mace Bearers in attendance are guests at the event and not there in an official capacity other than to assist the Mayor to robe/de-robe if required. They will not wear the Mace Bearer robes.

A caterer is appointed at the discretion of the Clerk following liaison with the Mayor who also agree the menu and ticket prices unless it is a fundraising Dinner whereby the Mayor along will select the cater and make the arrangements.

It is the Mayors responsibility to arrange the entertainment for the evening and any flower or table arrangements they may like.

Preceding the Dinner, the Mayor, assisted by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk undertake to set the seating arrangements, if required. Seating plans are made available in the Council Chamber, if used, for the information of guests, and in the Charter Hall.

If this is a formal Civic event the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk will be responsible for making the rest of the arrangements including the purchasing of wine, for selling at the event unless other arrangements have been made. However, if a fundraising event, this must be arranged by the Mayor, and the Clerk and Officers or members of staff are not expected to work or attend.

Permission to sell alcohol must be requested from the Property Committee.

Reception (if a formal Civic dinner, if a Charity event this does not apply)

If required by the Mayor, a reception, commencing at 7pm, can be held in the Council Chamber prior to the dinner.

Guests are welcomed by the Mayor who is dressed in full Robes and Chains. Refreshments are provided, as agreed by the Mayor and Clerk.

At approx. 7.20pm Clerk announces the move to the Charter Hall for guests, with the exception of the Chairs and Mayors for an official photo to be taken by the Okehampton Times or another person as arranged by the Clerk. Guests then make their way to the Charter Hall, either before or behind the Mayor at their discretion.

The entrance of the Mayor and Lieutenant/Deputy Lieutenant, if present, can be announced by the Clerk at the request of the Mayor, following which guests are asked to be seated.

Dinner and Entertainment

Guests are welcomed by the Mayor who invites the Mayor's Chaplain or a person at their discretion to say Grace, following which dinner is served, table by table, commencing with the Mayor.

After the meal the Mayor can if they wish, ask guests to stand for the Loyal Toast which is then proposed by the Deputy Mayor – 'The King'.

A short speech may be made by the Mayor followed by any entertainment that may have been arranged.

OKEHAMPTON TOWN ANNUAL EVENTS

These are annual events organised by others that the Mayor and/or Council may be invited to attend in a Civic capacity. As such the Mayor may wear the Robes and Chain of Office, as clarified below, for some parts of the proceedings and may be accompanied by the Mace Bearers and Clerk, with the exception of the Annual Town Meeting.

Carnival (Chain purchased in 2025)	October (3 rd Saturday)
Armistice Day (Chain purchased in 2025)	11 th November
Edwardian Evening (Chain purchased in 2025)	December (1 st Thursday)
Annual Town Meeting (Chain purchased in 2025)	March/April

Carnival

The Carnival is normally held annually on the 3rd Saturday of October, it is organised and arranged by the Carnival Committee.

This is a full day for the Mayor and commences with a Coffee Morning which the Mayor traditionally attends.

The Mayor is invited to judge the children's classes in the afternoon (wearing the day chain). Full Civic robes and chains (those purchased in 2025) are worn for the crowning and procession. Note – these must be collected from the Town Hall in advance of the event which is on a Saturday.

In the evening, the Mayor judges as asked by the Carnival Committee, crowns the Carnival Queen and takes part in the evening Procession in full Civic robes and chains (those purchased in 2025). The Carnival Committee organise a vehicle and driver for the evening procession.

Armistice Day – 11th November

Traditionally a service has been held at St James' Chapel every year on 11th November. The service is attended by the Mayor who may read the Roll of Honour if requested to do so.

Edwardian Evening

This event is organised by the BID, previously Everything Okehampton and the Chamber of Trade, and is usually held on the first Thursday of December, depending on the date.

In recent years the Mayor has held a small reception, commencing at 6pm, in the Council Chamber for visiting Mayors, Chairmen and local guests. Light refreshments including mulled wine and mince pies are provided by the Council.

This is followed by the Mayor's Carol Singing outside of St James' Chapel. The Excelsior Silver Band provides the music for the singing and the Mayor's Chaplain or nominated person assists by saying a few words and introducing the Carols. The Carols will be printed in the Okehampton Times as agreed by the Mayor, Assistant Clerk and Clerk. The sleigh and PA system can be provided by the Round Table on request and if available.

The Mayor is then expected (with the Mace Bearers and Town Clerk) to visit a selection of the shops and businesses that are taking part in the event.

Annual Town Meeting

This is not a meeting of the Council, it is called by the Mayor and held in the Charter Hall, usually on the last Monday of March or first Monday in April at 7pm. If the Chain of Office is worn, it will that purchased in 2025.

A report is given by the Mayor about the activities of the Council in the previous year and plans for the next and opportunity for members of the public to raise questions or make comments is given.

There is also opportunity for presentations from groups or organisations that may be of interest to the community.

The meeting is followed by refreshments provided by the Council.

TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Okehampton Town Council is occasionally asked to nominate a councillor to sit on an outside body. This is a group or organisation that seeks the support of the Town Council but it is not a Town Council committee, function or working party.

The Role of Okehampton Town Councillors as Representatives

A Town Council representative on an outside body is exactly that: they represent the Council as a body rather than acting in a personal capacity. This means that a Town Council representative must always act in accordance with Council policies. They must bear in mind the limitations of the Council as a corporate body, as well as the opportunities which Council involvement can offer to any outside group.

A councillor nominated to serve on an outside body should ensure that details of their appointment are declared on their Register of Interests.

When the Council considers issues relating to or affecting the outside body the Council representative must declare a personal interest, in accordance with the Councillors Code of Conduct.

Appointments to outside bodies will be made by the Full Council.

Following Council's decision, the Town Clerk will write to the organisations and advise them of the Town Council's representative. The councillor will not attend any of the organisations meetings until the organisation has confirmed they are happy for the councillor to be involved.

A Town Council representative must not commit Council resources or support, whether financial or 'in kind', to an outside body but should bring all such requests back to Council in writing for consideration.

Administrative support by Council staff is not available to outside bodies nor to Town Council representatives on outside bodies. Town Council representatives are responsible for carrying out the administration to support their own role.

Town Council representatives should update Council regularly about the outside bodies they are involved in. Ideally this should be done by providing reports to Council meetings. Minutes of outside bodies' meetings should be shared with all councillors and the Town Clerk.

Town Council representatives should attend as many meetings of an outside body as they are reasonably able and send apologies if they are not able to attend a meeting.

The Council expects its representatives to be kept informed of all meetings of outside bodies in a timely fashion and also expects that all paperwork will be shared with them.

A Town Council representative must always observe duties of confidentiality both to the Town Council and outside body. Deliberate leaking or disclosing of confidential information will be a breach of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

Any outside body is free to reject a specific Council representative on the understanding that their replacement will be nominated by Council, not by the outside body. Repeated non-attendance at meetings without good reason offers valid grounds to reject a specific Council representative.

All outside groups are free to inform the Council at any time that Council representatives are no longer required, if their constitution so allows.

General advice to Representatives on Outside Bodies

- Ensure that you know the legal status of the organisation – read their constitution.
- Make any general declarations of interest at the first meeting.
- Act with integrity.
- Discuss any new activities with relevant Council Officers (you may need to provide them with papers).
- Ask questions and make reasonable enquiries.
- Observe duties of confidentiality (in both directions).
- Carefully consider any conflicts of interest, declare interests, and if appropriate, leave the room for consideration of the business.
- Do not vote on any matters unless Council has requested you vote on their behalf.
- Take advice from the Monitoring Officer, and the Town Clerk, as appropriate.

TOWN COUNCILLOR GUIDANCE/PROTOCOL

Meeting Apologies

Under S85 of the Local Government Act 1972 Councillors who have not attended meetings of the council for 6 months consecutively automatically cease to be Members of the council. For this reason and in accordance with the LGA 1972 apologies should be approved by councils.

The only statutory excuse for apologies is service under the Crown in connection with a war or emergency as in the Secretary of State's opinion entitles the Member to relief (LGA 1972 S85(3)).

On 28th April 2025 the Council resolved that apologies should be more explanatory and recorded as such in the minutes and also that attendance figures, reported annually in the Council's Annual Report, should include the reasons for absence; for example, that a Councillor has been unwell.

Apologies must be tendered using the following categories for consideration of approval. They will be recorded as such within the minutes and used within the annual report from the commencement of the 2025/26 Mayoral year.

- Personal
- Illness (including that of dependants)
- Work
- Prior/Other Commitment (Arrangements made **prior** to the approval of the Annual Council Schedule of meetings and events, or appointments such as parents' evenings, award ceremonies, attendance by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor at other Civic events)

Absences without reason will not be considered for approval and Councillors will be recorded as being 'Absent'.

In order for apologies to be able to be considered by the Council/Committee, they must be conveyed to the Officer who will be attending the meeting by no later than 5pm, along with the reason. If in doubt apologies should be sent to both the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. Apologies sent after this time may not be received prior to the meeting and the Councillor will be recorded as being Absent.

Working Groups

Councillor attendance at meetings of working groups must be sent to the relevant Officer by 5pm the day before. Attendance will be recorded and may reported to the Council on occasion.

External Bodies Representation

Councillors must send apologies to the relevant organisation if they are unable to attend a meeting or event.